## **IN THE CLAIMS**

- 1. (currently amended) A method of screening for therapeutic agents useful in the treatment of a disease selected from the group consisting of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, dermatological diseases, gastroenterological diseases, metabolic diseases, inflammation, hematological diseases, respiratory diseases, neurological diseases and urological diseases in a mammal, comprising the steps of
  - i) contacting a test compound with a NPEPL1 polypeptide, and
  - ii) detecting binding of said test compound to said NPEPL1 polypeptide, and
  - iii) determining if the test compound has an effect on a symptom of the disease in an *in vivo* assay.
- 2. (currently amended) A method of screening for therapeutic agents useful in the treatment of a disease selected from the group consisting of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, dermatological diseases, gastroenterological diseases, metabolic diseases, inflammation, hematological diseases, respiratory diseases, neurological diseases and urological diseases in a mammal, comprising the steps of
  - i) determining activity of a NPEPL1 polypeptide at a certain concentration of a test compound or in the absence of said test compound, and
  - ii) determining the activity of said polypeptide at a different concentration of said test compound, and
  - <u>iii)</u> determining if the test compound has an effect on a symptom of the disease in an *in vivo* assay.
- 3. (currently amended) A method of screening for therapeutic agents useful in the treatment of a disease selected from the group consisting of cardiovascular diseases, cancer,

dermatological diseases, gastroenterological diseases, metabolic diseases, inflammation, hematological diseases, respiratory diseases, neurological diseases and urological diseases in a mammal, comprising the steps of

- i) determining the activity of a NPEPL1 polypeptide at a certain concentration of a test compound, and
- ii) determining the activity of a NPEPL1 polypeptide at the presence of a compound known to be a regulator of a NPEPL1 polypeptide, and

iii) determining if the test compound has an effect on a symptom of the disease in an *in vivo* assay.

- 4. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of contacting is in or at the surface of a cell.
  - 5. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the cell is *in vitro*.
- 6. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of contacting is in a cell-free system.
- 7. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the polypeptide is coupled to a detectable label.
- 8. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the compound is coupled to a detectable label.
- 9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the test compound displaces a ligand which is first bound to the polypeptide.
- 10. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the polypeptide is attached to a solid support.
  - 11. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the compound is attached to

a solid support.

12-26. (canceled)